'Black Belt'

HYPNOTISM IN SELF-DEFENSE

A psychologist who studied wing chun from Bruce Lee blends a modern science with an ancient Chinese martial art to develop the inner being

By Eugene H. Ho

"RELAX EVERY MUSCLE and nerve in your body. Just let the sound of my voice draw out all your inner tension, so your energy will be able to flow as free as a mountain stream. The longer you listen to my voice, the more detached you will become from all your personal problems and all your inner conflicts. Your breathing is becoming deeper and smoother, which helps your mind and body come into harmony, so that in today's practice you will be able to become one with your opponent, free of any unnecessary thought or action."

The voice is that of James W. DeMile, gung-fu (or kung-fu) instructor and clinical hypnotist, leading a group of students in his martial arts class. A wing chun do stylist who teaches in Hawaii, the 35-year-old instructor firmly believes that hypnosis can play a major role in making a person more responsive to martial art instruction.

"Through the process of hypnosis," says DeMile, "a student can conquer tension–the enemy of all athsletes. He can heighten his manual dexterity, develop more fluid movements, react more swiftly, shorten the time span normally required to learn a given technique, and achieve a very high level of self-confidence. When confronted by a stress situation such as a street fight, the practitioner finds himself more relaxed and thereby reacts in a more efficient manner."

DeMile, who holds a master's degree in psychology, credits his unorthodox approach in the martial arts to his profession as a clinical hypnosis consultant. He is past president of the Washington Professional Hypnosis Association, is presently on the Board of Directors of the Hawaii Clinical Hypnosis Association, and has his own private practice in Honolulu.

Often mistaken for a native Hawaiian, DeMile actually comes from San Francisco and is of Irish-Filipino-Spanish parentage. In 1960, while attending school in Washington, the psychology student observed a gung-fu demonstration by wing chun expert Bruce Lee.

"RELAX EVERY MUSCLE AND NERVE IN YOUR BODY," says James DeMile as he leads a group of students in his martial arts class. "Just let the sound of my voice draw out all your inner tension." The Hawaiian wing chun do stylist believes that through the process of hypnosis, a student can conquer tension, heighten dexterity and develop more fluid movements, bringing mind and body into harmony.